

Washington D.C – Congressman Kevin McCarthy today delivered the following remarks at the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee oversight hearing on the California high-speed rail project:

The research in the plan says that \$11 billion will come, after we build it. That may make for a good Hollywood move, 'build it and they will come,' but I don't think that's what the taxpayers said when they sent us here.

I believe when you look at this project from the beginning, when you hold it to account now, it is fundamentally different. And if you do build it, and they do not come, what are we going to give up to subsidize everyone who is on that train. That is a responsibility we have to look at.

TRANSCRIPT:

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate you for holding this hearing. I have had a long-standing concern about the viability of the California high-speed rail project. I know you've got a group of Members here from California and some with different opinions. The thing I want this committee to look at is what went before the voters of California, because what went before the voters of California for the high-speed rail is totally different from what's before the voters today.

It is our responsibility in our stewardship to make the decisions of where our tax dollars go, because this isn't a one-time investment. If you look at the project, it has more than doubled in cost to \$100 billion. If you analyze that people are going to take this rail and you read the project, that more than twice as many people who ride all of Amtrak are projected to ride in this. That study also says \$11 billion will come from private money. You have to look to yourself and also say 'does that measure, or is that even true?' An interesting thing happened, especially in listening to my good friend Mr. Costa from up the road about the need and investment.

In my district, this week, it was announced that there would be a new space travel venture; Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, aerospace designer Burt Rutan, fully funded to go to space with private money. They're projected, in their plan, to be able to recoup it. They didn't ask for government money, they did it on their own.

I also measure an idea that a plan says that the private sector will come because this will be profitable. There hasn't been any private sector money. The research in the plan says that \$11 billion will come, after we build it. That may make for a good Hollywood move, 'build it and they will come,' but I don't think that's what the taxpayers said when they sent us here.

I believe when you look at this project from the beginning, when you hold it to account now, it is fundamentally different. And if you do build it, and they do not come, what are we going to give up to subsidize everyone who is on that train. That is a responsibility we have to look at.

That is one of the fundamental reasons why I introduced H.R. 3143, which will freeze all unspent federal dollars through September of next year, while the GAO study is done on the project viability. That's not extreme, that's not taking it and saying no. What that's doing is saying that we have a responsibility to the taxpayers.

There's not one person on this committee that can say that plan that started out is exactly the same. So what we're saying is stop for a minute, let's put accountability to this, and let's actually know if we're going to just put money in it's not the idea to keep throwing bad money after bad money. If it's never going to be built; and the project of what you projected to be, that private sector money would be there, and it's not there.

We should hold the standards to this like any other project. If they said there would be private money in and it's not, they shouldn't be rewarded. If they said twice as many riders as all of Amtrak are going to ride this – just in our Valley, what they predict to ride, the millions of people – if you look at actual numbers, only 700-some thousand people take a train or a plane right now.

The population does not mix and match the numbers of what they say. That is our job everyday as a Member of Congress. That is our job everyday to follow up and follow through. High-speed rail is a great idea, but what are you going to give up for everyone who rides it. In a world that

we live in, with \$15 trillion debt and a state in which I come from that has a deficit each and every year, I think we have a different responsibility here.

That's why I introduced the bill I did. Let's stop, let's have actual accountability for it, and let's make a decision that is viable. If you ask the California voter today; they want to vote on this again. And they want to vote on it again because they want to change the vote that took place before. Because they do have a right to do that because the whole plan changed from what was presented to them. So I appreciate having the hearing, it's the right thing to do, to look into this and its right to ask the questions. And I yield back.